

Math 357 : Class 01

What should I expect in this course?

2024-01-08 (M)

Introduction

- ▶ Course: Math 357: Abstract algebra II
- ▶ Instructor: Stephen Wolff
- ▶ TA: TBD

Highlights from the syllabus (below)

To schedule

1. Office hours

- ▶ Twice weekly, each one hour plus spillover
- ▶ With me

2. Recitation

- ▶ Once weekly, one hour
- ▶ With TA

Plan of action:

- ▶ Propose days and times in class on Friday
- ▶ Start next week
 - ▶ Office hours this week by appointment

Textbook and communication

Textbook:

- ▶ I recommend a personal copy of Dummit & Foote (3e)
- ▶ Course reserves: Fondren Library Circulation Desk

My communication preferences:

1. In person (before or after class, during office hours)
2. By e-mail

Course objectives and grading

Two axioms:

1. Goals drive grades, not vice versa.
2. Grades are feedback for you, not judgment by me.

My goals for you:

1. Over the semester, you gain comfort and confidence contributing to your mathematical community by seeing, doing, and sharing mathematics.
2. By the end of the semester, you understand and can apply the concepts we engage.

Course objectives and grading

Grading scheme:

- ▶ See syllabus
- ▶ Focus on final destination (cf. Axiom 2 above)
 - ▶ Requiz long quizzes throughout the semester
 - ▶ Grade on each section of final exam replaces grade on corresponding midterm if former is higher

This [grade] is an imperfect measure of what I know at a particular point in time. It is not a measure of who I am or who I will be.

Policy: two remarks

1. Final exam

- ▶ It is the policy of the Mathematics Department that no final exam may be given early to accommodate student travel plans. If you make travel plans that turn out to conflict with the scheduled exam, then it is your responsibility to either reschedule your travel plans or take a zero on the exam.

2. Rice Honor Code (this course)

- ▶ On homework, all resources are allowed. In particular, you are strongly encouraged to work with one another. The purpose of homework is to help you to learn, share, practice, internalize concepts, and discover questions.
- ▶ On quizzes and exams, no external resources are allowed, unless the instructor explicitly states otherwise. The purpose of quizzes and exams is to help you to see what you can do so far, and identify what you want to work on.

La règle du jeu

Rule 1. Respect others and yourself.

Corollaries:

1. Be patient and kind, with one another and with yourself.
2. Be on time.
3. Be off phone.
4. SMTP
 - ▶ If you know you know, then please wait.
 - ▶ If you have an idea, then please share.
 - ▶ If you have no idea, then please think, listen, and ask (why?).

Questions?

1. Less what answers to give, more what questions to ask?
2. Alternative structure: Separate the exam from the course?
 - ▶ Cf. qualifying exams in many graduate programs
3. “Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?”
—T.S. Eliot, “Choruses from the rock” (1934)

Diagnostic quiz

Basic instructions:

1. Rate your confidence (0–4) for each exercise.
2. Work on some exercises.
 - ▶ If you think an exercise is unclear, then briefly (!) write your understanding and any additional hypotheses you are making, then proceed.
3. Submit your quiz.

Rice Honor Pledge:

On my honor, I have neither given nor received any unauthorized aid on this quiz.